



Delaware
Department of Transportation

MEDIA RELEASE



DelDOT Public Relations

1-800-652-5600 or 302-760-2080

dotpr@state.de.us

www.deldot.gov

May 21, 2009

Delaware Welcome Center Travel Plaza Web Site Launched

Provides Updates on Closure and Re-opening

Newark – The Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT) and contractor HMSHost Corporation are pleased to announce the launch of the Delaware Welcome Center Travel Plaza Web site. This Web site at www.delawarewelcomecenter.com will be a vital resource to the traveling public, providing updates on the closure and re-opening of the plaza.

At 1 a.m. Sept. 8, 2009, the existing travel plaza on I-95 near Newark will close so that construction can begin on the new Welcome Center. As soon as next summer, travelers can expect to see a 43,000-square-foot main building and 4,200 square-foot gas facility, including a convenience store, and 21 fuel pumps that will also include high-speed diesel fuel dispensers. The main facility will incorporate many elements of Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards in design and construction. Energy and water conservation equipment and fixtures will be used throughout the facility in conjunction with local stone and recycled materials.

“The new Delaware Welcome Center is a great way to promote Delaware and encourage partnerships between agencies,” Governor Jack Markell said. “From selling local merchandise to exhibiting Delaware archaeological finds, DelDOT and DEDO are working together to make this center represent the state in its best light. They will also work closely during the temporary closure to inform travelers of which I-95 exits to take so that they can dine and fuel up while still in Delaware.”

DelDOT and HMSHost will work closely with the Delaware Economic Development Office (DEDO), the Wilmington Convention & Visitors Bureau and other state and local tourism agencies to create a new Delaware State Visitor Center, within the Welcome Center. The Visitor Center will provide information on local and statewide attractions, events and activities. An upgrade to the entire parking lot will include a new truck parking area, a new Sunoco gas service station and an A Plus Convenience Store. This site will be environmentally friendly with the addition of 50 spaces of Cabaire truck parking with anti-idle truck electrification hookups. One of the retail stores will be “Postcards from Delaware”— home to regional Delaware products that highlight the state’s distinctive history, heritage and culture.

“We are excited about this opportunity to build a new Welcome Center and make a great impression on out-of-state travelers,” DelDOT Secretary Carolann Wicks said. “Memorial Day weekend kicks off the busiest travel season of the year. Since we are closing the existing plaza after Labor Day, we thought that the best policy would be to start informing travelers that change is coming. The Welcome Center Web site will supplement brochures and posters that will be posted at the current service plaza and various tourist attractions.”

“It is a pleasure to work together with other state agencies to design, develop and most importantly communicate plans to bring improved services to Delaware visitors and residents who depend on these facilities,” DEDO Director Alan Levin said. “This project also holds important job-creation potential at a time when a number Delawareans need the opportunity to work.”

Construction will last for about 10 months. Approximately 250 jobs will be created throughout the renovation timeframe. When complete, the new Welcome Center will employ 175 HMSHost associates.

“We’re pleased to launch this Web site as an information source for Delaware visitors who plan specific stops in their travels. Once we start construction in September, look for updates of photos and news between the fall of 2009 and the center’s re-opening in 2010,” said Michael Jones, HMSHost’s Vice President of Business Development.

Beginning in June 2010, HMSHost will stagger the openings, delivering the Sunoco gas station and the A Plus convenience store first, followed by new food and retail offerings. Brand name food outlets and retailers will include: Baja Fresh, Z Market, Starbucks Coffee, Burger King, Brioche Dorée Bakery Café, Cinnabon/Carvel and Famous Famiglia Pizza. Annually more than 3 million people make the existing plaza a stop on their travel itinerary.

For more information, visit DelDOT’s Web site at www.deldot.gov or www.delawarewelcomecenter.com.

###